(a) whether it is a fact that number of women has declined in defence recruitments during last many years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any steps in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) There is no overall decline in recruitment of women officers in the Defence Services. Measures to improve the intake of officers, including women, in the Defence Services is a continuous process.

Armed Forces Tribunal

634. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court observed 27 years ago the lacunae in justice delivery system for the service personnel ridden with archaic provisions owing to the colonial legacy;

(b) whether the much delayed Armed Forces Tribunal has now been put in place for speedier and transparent dispensation of justice for the service personnel; and

(c) how many courts will be set up under the AFT and the locations thereof including the strength of both judicial and administrative members functioning under the Tribunals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The Supreme Court had held in 1982, that the absence of even one appeal with power to review evidence, legal formulation, conclusion and adequacy or other wise of punishment in the laws relating to the armed forces was a distressing and glaring lacuna and urged the Government to take steps to provide for at least one judicial review in service matters.

The Armed Forces Tribunal has been set up for the adjudication or trial of disputes and complaints with respect to the service matters and also to provide for appeals arising out of verdicts of the Courts Martial in respect of personnel of the Armed Forces.

The Armed Forces Tribunal has a sanctioned strength of a Chairperson, fourteen Judicial Members and fifteen Administrative Members. At present, Chairperson, nine Judicial Members and fifteen Administrative Members are in position. Principal Bench of the AFT is located at Delhi. It has three courts. It has been decided to establish Regional Benches at Chandigarh, Lucknow, Jaipur, Mumbai, Kolkata, Guwahati, Chennai and Kochi; while the Regional Benches at Lucknow and Chandigarh will have three courts each, all other Regional Benches will have one court each.

Obsolete hand grenades used by soldiers guarding our border

635. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: